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## RECENT DISCUSSION OF UNIVERSITY PROBLEMS

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES.—The report of the Twenty-first Annual Conference contains the following extended papers and discussions:

The Organization of Research, Dr. J. R. Angell (Chicago). Remunerative Extra-University Activities, R. L. Wilbur (Stanford). Report on Academic and Professional Higher Degrees, A. O. Leuschner (California).

### ACADEMIC FREEDOM.—

“But perhaps the greatest attraction of university life, and the one which most distinguishes it is that embraced in my title, namely, its freedom. I approach here a much discussed topic and one certainly preeminent among the interests of a university. What is meant by academic or university freedom? How is our life free above other men’s lives? What are the true and proper limitations to our freedom and what are the hindrances to that freedom which university life in America has not succeeded in preventing?

. . . “It is the lot of men, for the most part, to be bound inescapably to their tasks, to have their work measured and apportioned by others, their methods prescribed, their products standardized. In most of these respects the academic man is free. . . . Long experience in the organization of teaching has seemed to indicate that to do it well it must be done sparingly, that the number of times a week in which a man can give his best to a class, without exhausting the batteries of his physical being, is relatively few, and that, for men of our race at least, the periods of instruction must be interrupted by relatively ample periods of cessation. This gives to the university worker frequently recurring periods of relief that are commonly spoken of as holidays and vacations. Where properly employed, however, they are less periods of leisure than they are periods of relief from appointments, during which the mind may be exclusively turned and the energies con-

centrated upon the advance of that investigation in which the university man is enthralled.

"But in whatever way the academic man chooses from year to year to employ that generous period of liberation from fixed duties, it is clear that he is uncommonly free, and that his freedom is one of the most splendid and generous sides of academic life. It is a kind of release which neither great wealth nor high administrative responsibility can assure. Another sort of freedom permissible in a university is freedom from artificial conventions of our complex society. . . .

"Finally, we come to that special freedom to which the term 'Academic Freedom' is sometimes confined—freedom of teaching and of thought and utterance associated with it. This is undoubtedly the most crucial point of our inquiry. Is a professor in a university, and above all in a *state* university, to be permitted to express himself without restraint? I am not sure that I represent the unanimous academic view, but as a practical answer I would say 'yes, once a man is called to be a professor.' The earlier grades of academic advancement are necessarily probationary, but once the professorial status is conferred the scholar cannot thereafter successfully be laid under restraint. The bounds upon this action must be those of his own defining—the consciousness that he is speaking as one in authority—as one appointed to act with such consideration and courtesy as become a gentleman, and that any lapse into utterance that is foolish and uninformed will affect the esteem in which he is held. The bestowal of the rank of professor is conditioned upon maturity of experience, soundness of knowledge, sincerity of character, and these qualities which enter into the considerations leading to the choice for the professorship must be trusted to work out satisfactorily for the man, his teaching and his institution. It is apparent that all academic choices are not equally successful. Some are obviously lamentable. Institutions like ours must occasionally suffer from the indiscretion and vulgarity of its members, but experience seems to indicate that a university suffers far less by enduring such conduct with dignity and restraint than it does by coercive or punitive action.

"An appointment to a professorship here with us, and I believe the same obtains generally in the most distinguished of our American institutions, is for life. I do not say that disloyalty

to country or grossly immoral conduct are not reasons for summary removal, but these considerations apart, a professorial appointment is practically a permanent engagement, and the university which does not stand for this principle, even in face of irritation and criticism, will in time be punished by a failure to command the interest of distinguished scholars. Doubtless it is the responsibility of the president, as occupying a position in which he is especially open to the effects produced by academic indiscretion, to counsel and to frankly advise, but I think he may not threaten, I think he may not advocate punishment. These last actions are incompatible with the democracy and independence essential to university fellowship.

"Our main safeguard is wisdom in selecting the university personnel, and advancing to professorial grade. The man who is known to be penetrated with the academic spirit, to whom pretence and insincerity are detestable, and who is chosen because he is a man of knowledge and of character will never offer real embarrassment to a university which fears not the principle 'No Refuge but in Truth.'

"Having said this, I wish to distinguish a university as a place where those who belong to it have free utterance, from a place where every comer may have freedom of speech. The two ideas are not consistent. The university is not an open forum. Its platforms are not free to the uninstructed or to those without repute. It is not a place where any sort of doctrine may be expounded by any sort of person. There is a public attitude that sometimes questions the right, particularly of a state university, to exclude any from public utterance in university halls. But just as the permanent members of a university are selected with great care, and for reasons of confidence in their knowledge, so those who are invited to speak incidentally or occasionally must be judged with comparable considerations."—*Extracts from the Inaugural Address of President Barrows, University of California.*

#### THE OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT.—

"The organization of the American Association of University Professors has already done a good work in insisting upon the real facts in the cases it has examined. With closer knowledge of the situation, it should be a helping agency in eliminating a